

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
July 28 - August 4, 2011

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1. New White House Strategy Aims to Curb Violent Extremism (08-03-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.

Washington — The Obama administration announced a new strategy August 3 that enlists the help of local communities to curb the threat posed by terrorist groups and other extremists that threaten the safety of Americans within the United States.

The strategy released by the White House recognizes a growing concern by national security officials of a threat from the radicalization of extremists within the U.S. homeland that has emerged since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

“Most recently, al-Qaida and its affiliates have attempted to recruit and radicalize people to terrorism here in the United States, as we have seen in several plots and attacks, including the deadly attack two years ago on our service members at Fort Hood,” President Obama said in the introduction to “[Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States](#)” (PDF, 2.8MB).

A single gunman on November 5, 2009, killed 14 people and wounded 29 others in a rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, which is among the most populous Army posts in the United States. The Army has charged a military doctor, Major Nidal Malik Hasan, in the shooting. There have been other instances of lone U.S. citizens and small groups attempting to carry out terrorist attacks within the country.

The administration’s strategy acknowledges that community residents are often better positioned to take the lead in thwarting a home-grown extremist because they know their communities best.

Obama cited Muslim-American communities in the strategy because they “have categorically condemned terrorism, worked with law enforcement to help prevent terrorist attacks, and forged creative programs to protect their sons and daughters from al-Qaida’s murderous ideology.”

The strategy’s central goal is to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing or recruiting individuals or groups within the United States to commit acts of violence. The strategy calls for the U.S. government to support local communities by sharing more information about the threat of radicalization; strengthening cooperation with local law enforcement, who work with the communities every day; and helping communities to better protect themselves against violent extremist propaganda, especially on the Internet, Obama said.

“Achieving this aim requires that we all work together — government, communities, the private sector, the general public and others — to develop effective programs and initiatives,” the strategy says.

The strategy is based on the president’s National Security Strategy and also the [National Strategy for Counterterrorism](#), which says that al-Qaida and its affiliates represent the pre-eminent terrorist threat to the United States. The new plan calls for enhanced federal engagement with local communities, building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism, and countering violent extremist propaganda while also promoting U.S. values.

2. Secretary Clinton on Meeting with Syrian Activists (08-02-2011)

U.S. Department of state, Office of the Spokesperson
Statement by Secretary Clinton

I met today with a small group of U.S.-based Syrian activists and members of the Syrian-American community to express our profound sympathy for all Syrian victims of the Assad regime’s abuse of its own citizens. In our discussion, the activists reaffirmed the internal opposition’s vision of a transition plan for a Syria that will be representative, inclusive and pluralistic; a new, united Syria with a government subject to the rule of law and fully respectful of the equality of all Syrians, irrespective of sect, ethnicity or gender. I encouraged the activists to work closely with their colleagues inside Syria to create this unified vision.

I admire the courage of those brave Syrians, both inside and outside Syria, who continue to defy their government’s brutality in order to freely express their universal rights. And I remain confident in the Syrian people’s ability to chart a new course for Syria’s future.

As I told the activists today, the United States will continue to support the Syrian people in their efforts to begin a peaceful and orderly transition to democracy in Syria and to have their aspirations realized. We have nothing invested in the continuation of a regime that must kill, imprison and torture its own citizens to maintain power.

The United States is working to move forward with additional targeted sanctions under existing authorities. We are exploring broader sanctions that will isolate the Assad regime politically and deny it revenue with which to sustain its brutality. The United Nations Security Council has also consulted this week on the escalating violence in Syria. Our view remains that strong action by the Security Council on the targeting of innocent civilians in Syria is long overdue. Some members of

the Security Council continue to oppose any action that would call on President Assad to stop the killing, and we urge them to reconsider their positions.

3. Statement by Secretary Clinton on Violence in Syria (08-01-2011)

U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson
Statement by Secretary Clinton

The Syrian regime's violent assault on civilians continued today, even as Ramadan began, highlighting again the brutality and viciousness of the Assad regime. Yesterday, President Obama said that President Assad has shown that he is incapable and unwilling to respond to the legitimate grievances of the Syrian people. Today, as the campaign of violence continues, President Assad is further ensuring that he and his regime will be left in the past, and that the Syrian people themselves will be the ones to determine its future.

During what should be a time of prayer and family gathering, we mourn the deaths of all those killed, especially innocent children like Layan Askar, a one-year old killed by a stray bullet from a security officer's gun in the southern city of al-Hirak. The United States stands with the Syrian people and we condemn the Assad regime's violent campaign against them. We call on President Assad to stop the slaughter now. We call on those members of the United Nations Security Council who have opposed any Security Council action that would call on Assad to stop the killing to reconsider their positions. And we call on the international community to come together behind the people of Syria in this critical time.

As I have said before, President Assad has lost his legitimacy with the Syrian people. Syria will be a better place when a democratic transition goes forward.

4. Ambassador DiCarlo on U.N. Peacekeepers in Darfur (07-29-2011)

Statement by Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo, U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Role of UNAMID in Darfur

Mr. President, The United States supports the peacekeepers of UNAMID who continue to play a critical role in the safety and security of the people of Darfur.

We are extremely concerned by the situation on the ground in Darfur. In light of the dangerous situation, we are pleased that the Council has recognized that the enabling environment necessary for a Darfur-based political process does not yet exist.

For any process to achieve lasting peace in Darfur, the ability of the participants to express their free will without fear of harm or retribution must be guaranteed. In Darfur, however, those who speak out are regularly arrested, tortured, or killed.

Mr. President, it is first and foremost the responsibility of the Government of Sudan to create these enabling conditions, and we strongly demand all parties to the conflict agree to an immediate ceasefire and engage in direct negotiation.

UNAMID's role in bringing peace to Darfur is critical. It's role, first and foremost, is to protect civilians and secure humanitarian access for millions of vulnerable people.

We are pleased that this resolution affirms that, based on reporting from the field — including UNAMID's reporting on political, civil, and human rights — the Security Council, taking into account the views of the African Union, will determine whether the enabling conditions necessary for UNAMID to engage in further efforts related to the Darfur-based Political Process have been met.

As civilians continue to be targeted and bombs dropped in Darfur, the United States welcomes UNAMID's focus on protecting civilians and ensuring humanitarians have the access they need to provide lifesaving assistance. And we call on all parties to the conflict to recommit themselves to serious, comprehensive political negotiations to bring an end to these atrocities.

Thank you, Mr. President.

5. Under Secretary Tauscher on Arms Control and Nonproliferation (07-29-2011)

Remarks by Ellen Tauscher, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security to the Commonwealth Club, Lafayette Library and Learning Center Lafayette, CA, July 28, 2011

Arms Control and Nonproliferation: The Road from Prague to Today

Good evening. Thanks for coming out tonight. I suppose you considered it safe because you knew I would not be asking for your vote.

I was fortunate to represent such great citizens as you for 13 years in Congress. You were so well informed on all the issues, in part because of the fantastic work of the Commonwealth Club and, of course, Dr. Duffy. All of us are safer today due to Gloria's efforts while working at the Pentagon to secure and eliminate dangerous weapons throughout the former Soviet Union after the Cold War.

Despite Gloria's great work and that of many others, we are still wrestling with dangerous legacies of the Cold War rivalry and adjusting our national security policies to reflect 21st century threats. That is what I am here to speak with you about.

The international security environment has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War. The massive U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals inherited from decades of superpower confrontation are poorly suited to address the security challenges posed by suicidal terrorists and unfriendly regimes seeking nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

Rejecting the notion that the world must glumly accept living with the fear of nuclear annihilation, President Obama two years ago in Prague declared the U.S. commitment "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." Although his words were galvanizing to many, some have criticized the President as naïve, and the goal as impossible or undesirable.

One of my predecessors likes to say that rather than a world without nuclear weapons, he would prefer a world where only one government has nuclear weapons. We tried that once and it did not last very long.

What is often overlooked about the President's goal is that he emphasized the practical steps toward achieving the goal that would make us safer. He acknowledged that it would take patience and

persistence to reach the final destination. He conceded it might not happen in his lifetime. Yet, not to try, he argued, was to surrender to fatalism and the inevitable spread and use of nuclear weapons.

Tonight, I am going to discuss how far we have come on those practical steps and where we are headed on efforts to reduce existing arsenals (disarmament) and halt the spread of nuclear weapons (nonproliferation).

Disarmament and nonproliferation are two sides of the same coin. Countries with nuclear weapons will be reluctant to disarm so long as they face the prospect that other states may acquire such weapons. Similarly, countries might pursue nuclear weapons because their neighbors or others possess them. You cannot succeed on nonproliferation without continued progress on disarmament.

And the reverse is true as well: this Administration's success in concluding the New START Treaty has helped to strengthen the nonproliferation regime.

Disarmament and arms control efforts enhance international security and promote international unity on preventing new nuclear states and nuclear terrorism.

Nonproliferation helps create the security conditions needed to make further progress on reducing the roles and numbers of nuclear weapons.

Since the President's Prague speech, we have made significant progress on both reducing nuclear forces and strengthening the nonproliferation regime.

A core principle of the President's approach is accountability. States do not exist in a vacuum and their actions affect and influence the decision making and strategic calculus of other states.

As the President said in Prague, "Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something."

We have followed through. When North Korea announced a nuclear test, this Administration led the UN Security Council to pass Resolution 1874, imposing the toughest international sanctions to date against North Korea.

This Administration also has united the international community to pressure Iran to comply with UN Security Council Resolutions and its international obligations not to develop nuclear weapons. For instance, Russia passed up substantial profits to deny an Iranian request for an advanced air defense system.

Syria also is being held accountable. The International Atomic Energy Agency in June ratcheted up scrutiny of Syria's nuclear activities by reporting them to the UN Security Council.

But accountability applies beyond just a few states. All countries in the world that possess nuclear technologies, material, and expertise must be responsible for ensuring that those items are safe and secure from theft or misuse. In addition, states that serve as commerce or transportation hubs must be mindful of not facilitating illicit transfers.

Indeed, vigilance is the responsibility of all countries because the consequences of a single nuclear weapon detonating anywhere in the world would have global consequences.

Seeking to cultivate a culture of greater accountability, President Obama hosted 46 countries at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April 2010. The Summit highlighted the need to work together to secure nuclear material and prevent illicit nuclear trafficking and terrorism. Participants agreed to secure all vulnerable nuclear material within four years. To measure our progress, South Korea will host another summit next March.

In international relations, cause and effect can be hard to determine. But there is no question that our efforts to strengthen nuclear security and unify the international community on North Korea, Iran, and Syria have been aided by the Administration's efforts to live up to its own treaty commitments and lead by actions, not just words.

One year after the President's Prague speech, the United States issued its Nuclear Posture Review, which aims to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons in our overall defense posture. That review declares that the fundamental role of U.S. nuclear forces is to deter nuclear attacks against the United States and our allies and partners. The longer term goal is to create the conditions to safely make that the sole purpose of our nuclear forces.

To reinforce the security benefits to be gained by states forgoing nuclear arms, the Nuclear Posture Review declared that we will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations. In other words, a state that abides by its commitments to forswear nuclear weapons does not need to fear the use of such weapons against it.

Another act of leadership by this Administration was negotiation and ratification of the New START Treaty with Russia. The Treaty entered into force in February following the Senate's approval last December. When it is fully implemented, the New START Treaty will result in the lowest number of strategic nuclear warheads deployed by the United States and Russia since the 1950s.

Earlier this month, Secretary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov brought an agreement into force committing each country to dispose of no less than 34 metric tons of excess weapon-grade plutonium, which represents enough total material for approximately 17,000 nuclear weapons.

In short, the two years since the President's Prague speech have been exceedingly productive. Nevertheless, we will not rest on our laurels. I can tell you with certainty that President Obama and Secretary Clinton will not let us do so. Despite the many pressing global challenges, the President has directed us to keep up the momentum and lay the ground work for additional progress.

With this in mind, I want to share our current and future plans to advance both nuclear weapons reductions and nonproliferation. Again, you cannot really do one without the other.

Signing and ratifying treaties generally get all the hype, but the real benefits come from implementation. This is true for the New START Treaty.

The Senate debate on the Treaty last December received significant media attention, but there has been barely a blip of coverage since, so let me update you on implementation.

The United States and Russia have exchanged data, held exhibitions, and notified each other on the status of our strategic forces. In fact, we have exchanged more than 1,000 notifications since

February. We also have begun conducting on-site inspections. To date, we have conducted seven inspections inside Russia, while it has done five here.

The access and information derived from this Treaty provide important predictability and stability in the U.S.-Russian nuclear relationship. Without that access and information, the risks of miscalculations, misunderstandings, and mistrust would be greater.

As we implement New START, we are preparing for further nuclear reduction negotiations with Russia. Under the President's direction, the U.S. Government is reviewing our nuclear requirements. The Department of Defense and other agencies will consider what forces the United States needs to maintain strategic stability and deterrence and consider factors such as potential changes in targeting requirements and alert postures.

As we consider further reductions, we are making the investments to ensure the United States will retain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal so long as nuclear weapons exist. Our intention over the next 10 years is to invest \$85 billion in the nation's nuclear infrastructure, including both Lawrence Livermore and Sandia national laboratories.

It may seem counterintuitive, but these investments will allow greater reductions because the same infrastructure is used to eliminate warheads, and with greater confidence and capability in our infrastructure and people we will not have to keep so many spare weapons.

In addition to our internal review, our approach to the next nuclear reductions agreement will be informed by the ongoing NATO Deterrence and Defense Posture Review. The primary task of the NATO posture review is ensuring that NATO has the "appropriate mix" of conventional, nuclear, and missile defense capabilities necessary to respond to 21st century threats. From our perspective, we want to ensure that NATO's posture and policies are not inconsistent with the positions laid out in the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review.

We have made clear that NATO reductions should occur in the context of Russia taking reciprocal measures to adjust its nuclear posture, including reductions in its non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Our overall objective with Russia is to seek future reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons: strategic and non-strategic nuclear warheads, including non-deployed weapons.

No previous arms control agreement has included provisions to limit and monitor non-deployed warheads or non-strategic warheads. To do so will require more demanding approaches to verification that will require extensive consultations between us and Russia.

As we work to reduce the excessive leftover weapons from our Cold War confrontation with Moscow, we also must counter the threats of today.

One of the serious challenges that we face is from ballistic missiles, which can be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction.

This Administration is dedicated to developing and deploying effective missile defenses. The Phased Adaptive Approach approved by President Obama in 2009 provides a more effective and a more timely response to the most likely missile threats that we will face in the foreseeable future.

But you do not need to ask this Administration to toot its own horn, ask our NATO allies. For the first time last year, NATO fully embraced our proposed missile defense approach of protecting all

European members' territories and populations. That was a very significant milestone given the past contentiousness of this issue.

While getting our NATO Allies to support this effort was a significant challenge, we have now embarked on an even tougher task: convincing Russia to join us in cooperation on missile defense. We believe that such cooperation can provide Russia confidence that our missile defenses will strengthen strategic stability and enhance both nations' capabilities to defend against emerging missile threats.

At the same time, the President has made clear that cooperation with Russia will not in any way limit U.S. or NATO missile defense capabilities and that the NATO alliance alone bears responsibility for defending NATO's members.

With both Russia and China, we want to transcend traditional thinking on strategic stability, often associated with Mutually Assured Destruction, and instead build toward a new concept of Mutually Assured Stability.

This would be a new approach to achieving stability. It would create incentives for achieving cooperation and avoiding conflict. Mutually Assured Stability would be based on mutual interest, respect, and peaceful cooperation. While differences would remain, states would share an overriding interest in peace and stability that is underpinned by arms limitations, nuclear and conventional, and other confidence-building measures.

That is why this Administration is dedicated to ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty—CTBT—and negotiation and ratification of the Fissile Material Cut off Treaty—FMCT. Both agreements can help limit the modernization and expansion of arsenals among other countries with nuclear weapons, as well as the acquisition of nuclear weapons by those countries that do not have them.

Let me first address the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. We are committed to working with members of both parties in the Senate to ratify the CTBT, just as we did for New START. We have no illusions that this will be easy. But we intend to stress three essential points as we make our case to the Senate and the American people.

First, CTBT ratification serves America's national security interests because it will help lead other states to ratify the treaty and thus strengthen the legal and political barriers to a resumption of nuclear testing, which would fuel the nuclear build up in Asia. It will help prevent the further advancement of nuclear capabilities in unstable regions, strengthen our leverage with the international community to pressure defiant regimes that engage in illicit nuclear activities, and lend the United States greater credibility when encouraging other states to exercise restraint or hold others accountable.

Second, we are in a stronger position today than ever before to effectively verify the Treaty through the International Monitoring System set up under the Treaty and our own strengthened national capabilities. The International Monitoring System demonstrated in 2006 and again in 2009 its ability to detect underground nuclear explosions – despite being incomplete.

Third, our nuclear stockpile has been kept safe, secure, and effective for almost two decades without nuclear testing. As I mentioned earlier, President Obama is committed to increase funding for the U.S. nuclear laboratories and the full nuclear complex to ensure that we can continue to have

confidence in our stockpile without testing. Indeed, our nuclear experts say they know more about how our nuclear weapons work than we did when we explosively tested them.

In essence, we have been abiding for 20 years by the CTBT's main obligation—not testing—without the benefit of locking other states into that same commitment.

I should note that Glenn Seaborg, whose name adorns this wonderful learning center, was a champion of a test ban. In a book published 30 years ago—16 years before the CTBT was completed—he argued that such a ban would help increase stability, impede arms races, and lend greater credibility to U.S. efforts to stop the spread of the bomb. His reasoning was right then and it is right now.

Prohibiting tests is in our national interest and so is ending the worldwide production of fissile material for weapons purposes. That is the objective of an FMCT. We do not need more fissile material that could be used to make more bombs, especially when we know terrorist groups are seeking to get their hands on such material anyway that they can.

Our preference is to negotiate an FMCT within the Conference on Disarmament, but that body has been deadlocked by Pakistan. Thus, the United States is joining with other key countries to start preparations for a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) elsewhere until the Conference can get down to work.

Although that is a pretty full agenda, we also have our eyes squarely on Iran, Syria, and North Korea, and the dangers posed by further proliferation.

After two decades of clandestine nuclear activities, Iran continues to refuse to comply with its international obligations. Iran is moving in the opposite direction of addressing international concerns by declaring its intention to triple its capacity to enrich uranium to nearly twenty percent. Iran also continues to move forward with its enrichment and heavy-water related activities, all in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

As we have repeatedly said, we do not dispute Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear program. But, with rights come responsibilities. Iran has a responsibility to restore confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.

We are going to maintain pressure on Iran unless and until it engages in a constructive way and complies with its international obligations.

The same goes for Syria. It must uphold its international obligations, including providing access to any site or information deemed essential by the International Atomic Energy Agency to complete its investigation into Syria's clandestine nuclear activities.

Our policy on North Korea remains the same: we do not accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapon state. We remain committed to the 2005 Joint Statement and its core goal of the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.

We urge all countries to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874 fully and transparently. And we are encouraging all states to take all measures necessary to impede North Korea's efforts to develop its nuclear and missile programs and engage in proliferation activities.

The United States continues to consult closely with partners in the Six-Party process. We were pleased last week when the North and South Korean negotiators met with each other on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit.

To determine whether North Korea is serious, Secretary Clinton announced that the United States has invited a senior North Korean official to New York for talks this week.

Nevertheless, we have made it consistently clear that before any resumption of Six-Party Talks, North Korea must improve relations with South Korea and demonstrate a change in behavior, including taking irreversible steps to denuclearize, complying with international law, and ceasing provocative behavior.

As the President said, the United States will lead efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, but we cannot do it alone. We require the contributions of all, and we need to make use of all the resources and tools available.

One of the most important tools is the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, whose mission is to help countries maintain appropriate nuclear safeguards, safety, and security, while also verifying that civilian nuclear programs are not being used covertly for weapons.

We are seeking to improve the IAEA's abilities to investigate potential and actual undeclared nuclear activities and to apply effective and efficient safeguards at declared nuclear facilities to ensure they are not abused or misused.

A key initiative is getting all countries to adopt what is called an Additional Protocol to give the IAEA additional authorities to do its job. All told, nearly 140 states, including the United States, have either signed or concluded Additional Protocols since 1997. We are engaging with those states who have not yet signed an Additional Protocol to do so.

As more countries potentially turn to nuclear power, the IAEA will be vital to providing confidence that the threat of nuclear proliferation does not grow with the demand for nuclear energy.

Underscoring our efforts to support peaceful uses of nuclear energy, this Administration has pledged \$50 million in new funding for IAEA activities toward that end and we are encouraging other countries to raise another \$50 million.

Describing the Cold War era, President Obama said generations lived with the knowledge that their world could be erased in a flash of light. Our purpose is to help create a world where future generations can harness the benefits of the atom, while not having that same fearful knowledge.

For our part, the United States declared in the Nuclear Posture Review that we would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or our Allies and partners. This should come as no surprise given our military's ever increasing emphasis on precision and the avoidance of non-combatant casualties and collateral damage. Attributes not associated with nuclear weapons. The NPR states that it is in the U.S. interest and that of all other states that the 65-year record of non-use be extended forever.

The only guaranteed way to realize that goal is to eliminate nuclear weapons, which, as I have described, will be a gradual process. But we cannot proceed at a glacial pace. Delay or inaction on either disarmament or nonproliferation will erode momentum until both grind to a halt.

Let me conclude by returning to an observation by Glenn Seaborg in his book of 30 years ago. While hopeful that the political will was emerging for a test ban, he lamented that Washington and Moscow had settled for driving testing underground in the early 1960s than going for a complete ban. As a result, he judged that the value of a test ban had diminished over time because the United States and Soviet Union were negotiating at a higher and more dangerous level.

Yet, he warned, "If we allow the present opportunity to slip away, however, the next one, if there is a next one, will be at a level still higher and still more dangerous." The Obama Administration is determined not to let our opportunities slip away. We are focusing carefully on each practical step to ensure our footing on steady ground as we follow the President's path to a more peaceful world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you. I welcome any questions that you have.

6. Assistant Secretary Gordon on U.S. Foreign Policy and the OSCE (07-28-2011)

Philip H. Gordon, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
Statement before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington, DC

U.S. Foreign Policy and the OSCE: From Astana to Vilnius

Chairman Smith, Co-Chairman Cardin, Members of the Commission: Thank you very much for inviting me here today to discuss our agenda for the OSCE. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the excellent Helsinki Commission staff members who have worked long, hard, and in cooperation with their State colleagues to safeguard the principles and commitments of the OSCE, and to hold participating States to account.

I will focus my remarks today on the OSCE in the aftermath of the December, 2010 Astana Summit. I will begin by looking at our core foreign policy goals for the OSCE, reviewing the achievements of Astana and looking forward to the OSCE's Ministerial meeting in Vilnius this December.

OSCE: Shared Values, Inconsistent Implementation

Nowhere does the United States have better or more valuable partners than in Europe. The U.S. and Europe share common values, our economies are intertwined, and our militaries work together to address common security challenges. U.S. bilateral engagement with our European partners is complemented by our work together in key multilateral regional institutions. Our engagement with NATO Allies – including operational military cooperation – on the full gamut of security issues has no equivalent anywhere else in the world. Through the OSCE we are able to engage on such U.S. priorities as advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms, building democratic institutions in the Western Balkans, combating trafficking in persons, as well as North Africa and Afghanistan, to name just a few. In this age of a tight budget and many demands, multilateral approaches often present a more effective alternative to unilateral engagement.

The OSCE was founded on the principle of comprehensive security, that is, the conviction that true security has an economic and environmental dimension and a human dimension, in addition to the political-military dimension. As the world's largest regional security organization with membership that stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok, with partners in Asia, the Middle East, and North

Africa, the OSCE has unmatched scope to advance this concept and strengthen security across all three dimensions and increasingly beyond the OSCE region itself.

Today the principles and commitments enshrined in the founding document of the OSCE – the Helsinki Final Act – are facing serious challenges from both inside and outside the organization. From within, there is uneven application of the Helsinki principles, and I regret to say that there are OSCE participating States where journalists can find it too dangerous to report the news, where political activists are beaten and incarcerated, where religious and minority groups, such as the Roma, continue to face persecution, and where economic growth is stifled by endemic corruption. Regional crises and transnational threats are proliferating. Efforts to resolve the protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh continue to face frustrating obstacles. The OSCE's inability to reach consensus on ways to address these issues is increasingly identified by critics as evidence of the organization's ineffectiveness.

This Commission – and your able staff – know well the reasons why OSCE decision-making is complicated and how easy it is for one nation to use the organization's consensus rule to prevent timely and effective action in a situation of crisis. Russia's determination to limit the role of OSCE in Georgia, for example, has diminished possibilities for international engagement in this region where transparency and confidence-building are sorely needed.

Problems like these make headlines, but they offer only a partial picture of the role OSCE plays in Europe today. The OSCE has deepened and strengthened European and Eurasian security through initiatives to enhance rule of law, provide for free and fair elections, develop an independent media, respect the rights of minority groups, and improve the ability of citizens to exercise their fundamental freedoms. The OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE's field missions have been at the forefront in assisting OSCE participating States to strengthen their democracy and thereby their security.

In concert with those bodies, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Chairmanship's Special Representatives on Tolerance and Gender Issues make for a powerful set of instruments to help participating States live up to their commitments and thus bring security to the region.

The OSCE has made tremendous strides toward building a zone of prosperity and stability that stretches from western Canada to the Russian Far East. Although it is at times stymied by a lack of sustained political will and attempts by some participating States to constrain its flexibility, the OSCE nonetheless remains uniquely positioned to build confidence, promote good governance, and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe and Eurasia.

Moving Forward from Astana

At the Astana Summit last December – the first OSCE Summit in eleven years – the 56 participating States issued the Astana Commemorative Declaration – a strong reaffirmation of the Helsinki principles and commitments and the entire OSCE acquis. This included the first-ever explicit affirmation by the former Soviet states of the declaration originally made in the OSCE's 1991 Moscow Document that makes human rights conditions in individual OSCE participating States matters of “direct and legitimate concern” to all of them. The final document also tasked future OSCE Chairmanships to build on efforts last year to develop an action plan to address a range of common challenges that notably include the protracted conflicts, conflict prevention and crisis response, counter-narcotics, counterterrorism, issues facing media freedom, anti-Semitism, treatment of minorities such as the Roma and Sinti, and trafficking in persons to name a few.

The Astana Summit also underscored the vital role that civil society plays in the OSCE region, as numerous human rights activists from some of the OSCE region's most embattled corners engaged constructively with government delegations and provided input to the work of the Summit. With strong U.S. support, NGOs and civil society representatives participated in the final three days of the Human Dimension portion of the Review Conference preceding the Summit, as well as in a civil society forum and an independently organized parallel NGO conference. Secretary Clinton also held a vibrant, standing-room only town hall event at Eurasian University with NGO and civil society representatives.

The Astana Summit opened a new chapter for the OSCE. It provided renewed impetus for action to make the OSCE space – including the Central Asian space – even more democratic, prosperous, and secure for our citizens. The Administration has remained deeply engaged in the work of the OSCE across all three dimensions. We are seeking ways to sustain the momentum that was generated – in both government and civil society networks – by the Astana Summit.

Lithuania's Chairmanship

In 2010 and 2011, crises in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan demonstrated the ongoing need for the OSCE to hold its membership to the highest standards of human rights performance and comprehensive security. The tragic case in Russia of Sergey Magnitsky, a lawyer who died in pre-trial detention, is most illustrative of the problems facing the judiciaries of too many member states, and a problem that we are seeking to address in close consultation with Senator Cardin and others on this committee.

We will continue to press for greater implementation of OSCE commitments in Europe. The Arab Spring has shown us vividly the link between democracy and security, and we will look for opportunities to offer OSCE expertise in democratic transition and institution building to the countries of North Africa and to the OSCE's other partners, such as Afghanistan.

Soon after the Astana Summit, Belarus presented the first challenge for the OSCE as its government launched a sustained, brutal crackdown against opposition politicians and activists, civil society, and independent media after a flawed presidential election. Since then, we have worked closely with the Lithuanian Chairman-in-Office, the EU, and like-minded OSCE participating States to manage and address these issues. Despite rhetoric that it was willing to cooperate with the OSCE, Belarus refused to extend the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk, claiming that the Office's mandate had been completed. At the government's insistence, the OSCE office in Minsk officially closed in March. In stark contrast to the stunning events unfolding during the Arab Spring in Northern Africa, Belarus seems to have entered a prolonged winter of backpedaling on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In response, we joined with 13 other participating States to invoke the Moscow Mechanism, a tool established in the 1991 Moscow Document that allows for special rapporteur missions to address concerns about the implementation of human rights commitments. Together we appointed a rapporteur to investigate the crackdown by the Government of Belarus against opposition candidates, civil society representatives and journalists, and the mass arrests that followed the December 19 presidential election. Though Belarus refused to cooperate, the rapporteur was able to conduct his fact-finding mission and reported back with a number of constructive recommendations that holds the Government of Belarus accountable for its failure to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, prohibiting torture, and upholding the rule

of law. We continue to work to ensure that the OSCE and the international community focus on the concerns raised in the report.

Dramatic developments in OSCE's partner states have captured headlines. Working closely with the Lithuanian Chair, we have supported engagement with Tunisia and Egypt in order to offer OSCE expertise to nascent democracies emerging in North Africa. We are taking a realistic, pragmatic approach offering advice and guidance on issues such as democratic elections and human rights monitoring. Assistance could come through sharing of materials such as handbooks and guidelines, visits by subject matter experts, and participation in OSCE meetings, conferences, seminars, as well as specific projects – either in the OSCE region or in the Partner State. At the request of Egyptian activists, ODIHR is already organizing a workshop for Egyptian civil society on international standards and tools of election observation, in advance of Egypt's November parliamentary elections.

Goals for Vilnius

In December, the OSCE will meet in Vilnius, Lithuania at the level of foreign ministers to review results achieved since Astana and take decisions for future work. The United States is working with like-minded partners to achieve specific results in all three dimensions:

- In the political-military dimension, we want to agree on a substantial update of the Vienna Document, which will be reissued at Vilnius for the first time since 1999. Building on the existing measures, we are re-examining how data exchange, notification, observation, and possibly other measures can offer greater security and transparency in light of today's smaller post-Cold War military establishments. Our effort to update the Vienna Document is part of our broader commitment to improve military transparency in Europe and ensure arms control and the confidence and security building measures regime are relevant to the challenges of the 21st century. U.S. efforts to find a way forward on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty are separate from this work on Vienna Document, but they are motivated by some of the same goals and concerns: we want to achieve greater military transparency and cooperation on conventional forces in Europe as a route to increased confidence and trust.
- In the economic-environmental dimension, we want to endorse greater economic transparency, good governance and anti-corruption measures, as well as identify ways to better empower women in the economic sphere. Citizens must be able to trust their governments to develop economic and environmental resources in a responsible and equitable manner. We hope that at Vilnius all OSCE members will endorse the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative endorsed by the G-8 in Deauville, and agree on goals and best practices to promote the economic empowerment of women.
- In the human dimension, we hope to take the Helsinki Final Act into the digital age. We are seeking consensus on a declaration that would explicitly acknowledge that human rights and fundamental freedoms can apply to online activity as they do to offline activity. This includes, in particular the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association. Even more urgent is the need to reaffirm and strengthen governments' commitment to the protection of journalists. Both of these goals address priority issues for both the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of Media and the Lithuanian Chairmanship.

We also want to see the OSCE give greater attention to Central Asia, including addressing longstanding challenges to democracy and human rights in that region. The OSCE can and should

assist Kyrgyzstan's fledgling parliamentary democracy and play a greater role in helping stabilize and secure Afghanistan, particularly in the area of border management.

Of course, we envision that the Vilnius Ministerial will be an opportunity for OSCE Ministers to declare formally our support for Mediterranean Partners, such as Egypt and Tunisia, and offer to assist them in democratic institution building and electoral reform.

Finally, the OSCE must continue to play a direct role in resolving the protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh. As the 2008 war in Georgia showed, these conflicts hold the devastating potential to destabilize security in the OSCE region, and their resolution must remain a high priority for the OSCE and all its member states. We intend to use the meeting in Vilnius to highlight progress made on each of these conflicts this year and the challenges that remain to be addressed. This is difficult and frustrating work. But OSCE is one of a handful of international institutions that has the political standing to engage on the protracted conflicts, and it has the ability to shine a light on the human and security situation in these regions. Impartial, comprehensive, accurate reporting is not something to be feared or avoided, and that is what OSCE is ideally suited to deliver, if it can get unhindered, status-neutral access to regions of conflict. If the OSCE's role is undermined, the international community is diminished; the United States will stand firmly against that. We will continue to push hard to improve the OSCE's ability to respond to crises in a fast and effective manner, including preventing the development of new conflicts in the OSCE area.

OSCE Moving Forward

We all know that a consensus-based organization with 56 participating States sometimes moves in baby steps when we want to see larger and faster strides. We can take comfort that whether the OSCE is working to eliminate rocket fuel in Ukraine, advocating for journalists and bloggers in Azerbaijan, or developing a multi-ethnic police force in Serbia and Kyrgyzstan, those small steps can result in impressive progress over time, and thus deserve our sustained attention.

The OSCE enables its participating States to address issues of concern in a forum which allows for a full and open debate. The issues can seem intractable but exchanging words beats the alternative of exchanging bullets. We have had bullets exchanged in the OSCE space in the last three years and that is something the OSCE participating States need to eliminate in the future. The potential of the OSCE has not yet been fulfilled – and therein lies its promise for the future.

The Helsinki Commission – you, the Commissioners, and the experts on your staff – play a vital role in ensuring that the participating States keep the promises they made at Helsinki. With your support, the United States will continue to play a leading role at the OSCE, to strengthen and build upon the progress the participating States have made over the past 35 years, and bring us closer to a truly stable, secure, and prosperous OSCE region.

I am happy to take your questions at this time.
